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As this volume will, in all probability, close the collection of Sumner's printed works in the line of essays and short pieces, those who can assist us in securing available materials will confer a substantial favor.

ALBERT G. KELLER

LEST WE FORGET

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The new administration, with democratic majorities in both house and senate, was entrusted with power in the belief that it will be responsive to the needs and demands of the people. But in the various programs suggested for the amelioration of present-day abuses nowhere has any mention been made of the early adoption of the metric system as an obligatory system in this country, accompanied by the destruction of the old systems. The writer has reached that second childhood when, at the request of his children for aid in doing their "sums," he must again wade through the chapters in the arithmetic devoted to the various tables of hodge-podge units, and he realizes, as never before, the truth of the statement that the whole thing is "a wickedly brain-destroying piece of bondage under which we suffer."

To see young minds eager for the study of live subjects forced to work hundreds of useless problems in this treadmill of heterogeneous dead and dying units is enough to rouse the ire of any one against those selfish interests which are blocking the way of reform.

When we consider the situation candidly we must acknowledge that the matter is one of extreme importance. A great part of the under-weight and false-measure frauds are directly due to our confused system of units, and on the adoption of the metric system under such protective regulations as are in force in Germany, for example, a tremendous saving would be effected in the cost of living to wage earners especially. Can not all scientists, who understand so well the merits of the metric system, rouse themselves and make a strong effort to have the bill passed which has been before congress for many years, backed by the various government bureaus

and reform leagues? It took thirty years to obtain the parcel post; must we wait that long? Or can we not make a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together, and get it through next winter?

A. H. PATTERSON

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,
CHAPEL HILL

TO WHOM IS THE ACADEMIC COSTUME WORTH WHILE?

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Even if we disagree on the use of medieval costume in modern institutions as a matter of academic good taste, may we not set our faces against any participation in the decision by a commercial propaganda aiming to extract large profits from members of an underpaid profession?

T.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Cambrian Brachiopoda. By CHARLES D. WALCOTT. Monograph U. S. Geological Survey, Vol. 51. Part I., Text. Part II., Plates. 1912. Pp. 872, 76 text figures, 104 plates.

The dominating impression which this extraordinary work leaves upon one who runs a hasty eye over its pages and luxurious plates, is that of the marvelous industry and enthusiasm of its author. If the paleontological genius who controlled these facts here assembled had nothing else to do, the wonder might be less. But amid the responsibilities of a great office and affairs of widest scientific concern, the writer of this book seems to let no minutes go to waste which can be made to forward his expositions of that field in paleontology of which he has long been the most effective illuminator.

Here are two quarto volumes devoted, by title at least, exclusively to the Brachiopods of the Cambrian fauna. Nearly twenty years ago students of this multitudinous, variant group of animals believed the sum of knowledge concerning them enough to justify a treatise on the broad lines of their generic characters, so Professor James Hall and his assistant published two big quartos on this subject, therein searching out every nook and cranny that might afford traits of generic sig-